



PRESS RELEASE

Addressing the Health Human Resource Crisis in Radiology Departments Across Canada

May 30, 2023, Ottawa - With recent media coverage highlighting the shortage of medical radiation technologists in Canada, the Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists (CAMRT), the Canadian Association of Radiologists (CAR) and Sonography Canada are coming forward in support of their provincial counterparts and to demonstrate the devastating impact that this is causing to the healthcare system and to patients across the country.

“Canadians were already waiting an average of 50 to 82 days for CT scans and 89 days for MRI prior to the pandemic. This is 20 to 50 days longer than the recommended 30-day wait time. According to a recent survey among our members, these delays are currently worse. At the same time, with radiologists, medical radiation technologists and sonographers alike experiencing high levels of burnout with no solution in sight, the situation will only deteriorate.” said Dr. Ania Kielar, President, CAR. Strategies must be implemented to recruit and retain technologists across the country. There also needs to be consideration for implementing new technologies that would help in enhancing workflows in radiology departments and reduce the backlog for medical imaging (MI) in Canada.

The CAMRT and Sonography Canada have reported that burnout was a troubling issue for the MRT profession even before the pandemic, with more than a third of the workforce reporting signs of burnout in 2018. CAMRT's regular mental health surveys show that the pandemic pushed substantial numbers of MRTs to the breaking point. In 2021, there was an 80% jump in MRTs reporting signs of burnout, meaning two-thirds (64%) of the workforce now go to work feeling emotionally exhausted.¹ Similarly, in 2021 over 56% of sonographers reported that they were feeling overextended at work to the point of emotional exhaustion, versus 42% in 2018.²

“We have been sounding the alarm about this dire workforce situation with governments across the country. Our own research conducted in the Fall shows the same rates of MRTs considering leaving

¹ Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists. The Mental Health of Medical Radiation Technologists in Canada: 2021 Survey. 2021. Available at: <https://www.camrt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/CAMRT-National-Mental-Health-Survey-2021.pdf>

² Canadian Journal of Medical Sonography. Sonographers are S.A.D; Sonography Canada is M.A.D.: National Mental Health Survey 2021. Available from <https://sonographycanada.ca/app/uploads/2022/01/CJMS-Volume-12-issue-4.pdf>.

the profession all across the country. This is a real crisis and must be addressed immediately; the health and wellness of all Canadians is at stake.” said Irving Gold, CEO, CAMRT.

“Without new investments in Human Resources we worry that the quality of diagnostic imaging and the care provided will decline as a result of burnout among our members. Recruiting and retaining staff in the future is going to be even more daunting if we continue overstretching our care system.” said Susan Clarke, CEO, Sonography Canada.

To ensure that Canadian patients across the country have access to the care they deserve, the CAR in collaboration with the CAMRT and Sonography Canada is advocating for investments in the following area with health human resources in radiology departments at the top of this list.

- Implement a health human resources strategy, specifically aimed at hiring and retaining more medical radiation technologists (MRTs) and sonographers.
- Harness homegrown AI applications for the strategic prioritization of health human resources, technology, and infrastructure for medical imaging (MI) in Canada.
- Invest \$1 billion over three years for MI equipment to be distributed to the provinces on a per capita basis, with the corresponding investments in the MRTs and sonographers required to deliver this imaging.
- Support the implementation of a national e-referrals program (clinical decision support) to equip referring health professionals with better access to MI guidelines, ensuring that patients receive the right imaging test at the right time.

Now is the time to act. Radiology departments cannot continue to sustain the overwhelming need for imaging without a strong health human resources strategy and additional investments. Patients deserve better.

-30-

For media inquiries contact:

Natalie St-Pierre

613-854-0675

nst-pierre@car.ca

